

144th session of the WHO Executive Board (24 January - 1 February 2019)

Agenda Item:

5.5.1 Primary health care towards universal health coverage

Statement:

PSI appreciates this opportunity to address the EB of the WHO.

PSI notes the importance of each of the sub-items in this item of the agenda. We speak to these, drawing on the lived experiences of the multi-cadre memberships of our 700 affiliates in the health and social sector, across the world.

PSI welcomes the DG's report on “Primary health care towards universal health coverage” and applaud the renewed spirit of the PHC approach “to deal effectively with current and future health challenges” which it presents, as espoused at the Astana Conference.

This places PHC at the heart of attaining universal access, and thus a prerequisite for UHC. PSI thus calls on member states to endorse this vision for PHC in the 21st century.

With its people-centred approach and “emphasis on tackling the determinants of health” this vision should encourage fiscal justice which ensures the contribution of all stakeholders, particularly MNCs, to funding governments for healthcare delivery through taxation. The provision of Primary health care as an integrated element of the public health system will equally strengthen health systems, particularly in LMICs.

PSI welcomes the Report of the DG which highlights the importance of Community Health Workers for universal access to healthcare. The Report refers to the WHO Guideline on Health Policy and System Support to Optimize Community Health Worker Programmes, launched in October 2018, as a global policy framework for governments. We appreciate the opportunity PSI had to participate in the rigorous work of the guideline development.

Considering the relevance of the Guidelines, PSI is of the view that the Guideline document should be endorsed by the executive board, and progress in its application reported to the World health assembly every three years, along with other health workforce-linked Resolutions and in line with Resolution World health assembly 69.19 (2016).

Thank you.